

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 406

CE 082 469

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TITLE Nontraditional Employment and Training. Trends and Issues Alert No. 30.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 2001-00-00
NOTE 4p.
CONTRACT ED-99-CO-0013
AVAILABLE FROM For full text: <http://www.ericacve.org/fulltext.asp>.
PUB TYPE ERIC Publications (071) -- Reference Materials - Bibliographies (131)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Annotated Bibliographies; *Career Choice; Career Education; Comparative Analysis; Education Work Relationship; *Educational Change; Educational Opportunities; Educational Trends; Emerging Occupations; *Equal Education; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); Labor Force Development; Males; Minority Groups; *Nontraditional Education; *Nontraditional Occupations; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; Trend Analysis; *Vocational Education; Womens Education; Work Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS African Americans; Australia; Carl D Perkins Vocational Technical Educ Act 1998; United States; Workforce Investment Act 1998

ABSTRACT

The Perkins Act and the Workforce Development Act (WIA) brought major changes to the arena of nontraditional employment and training. Perkins eliminated set-asides for displaced homemakers, single parents, and single pregnant women but mandated increased enrollment in high-wage nontraditional training. With the WIA, the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act was repealed; however, some WIA provisions required a focus on nontraditional occupations (NTOs), which tend to offer higher wages than female-dominated occupations do. Despite more than 20 years of equity legislation and programming, many barriers nevertheless remain. Recent research shows that early nontraditional experiences can have a lasting impact on women's career directions, that experiences in technical or hands-on activities increase career-related confidence and self-efficacy, and that the way nontraditional careers are advertised and perceived by the public has a significant impact on who pursues those opportunities. Although most NTO programming is aimed at women and girls, a significant recent thrust has focused on how males are affected by stereotypes in occupations that are nontraditional for their gender. Increasing emphasis is also being placed on encouraging minorities to pursue careers in which they have historically been underrepresented. (A 22-item annotated bibliography constitutes approximately 80% of this document.) (MN)

Nontraditional Employment and Training Trends and Issues Alert No. 30

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Nontraditional Employment and Training

The Perkins Act and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) brought major changes to the arena of nontraditional employment and training ("Gender Equity" 1999; "WIA and Perkins" 2001). Perkins eliminated set-asides for displaced homemakers, single parents, and single pregnant women, but mandated increased enrollment in high-wage nontraditional training. With the WIA, the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act was repealed, but some WIA provisions require a focus on nontraditional occupations (NTOs). Programs aimed at strengthening the self-sufficiency of female welfare recipients are also emphasizing NTOs, which tend to offer higher wages than female-dominated occupations ("Nontraditional Employment for Women" 2001; NOW 1999).

However, despite 20+ years of equity legislation and programming, many barriers remain. Recent research findings show that early nontraditional experiences can have a lasting impact on women's career directions (Hensley 2000), experiences in technical or hands-on activities increase career-related confidence and self-efficacy (Betz and Schifano 2000), and the way in which nontraditional careers are advertised and perceived by the public has a significant influence on who pursues those opportunities (Miller et al. 2000). Although most NTO programming is aimed at women and girls, a significant recent thrust focuses on how males are affected by stereotypes in occupations nontraditional for their gender (Flood et al. 2000; Henson and Rogers 2001; Meadus 2000; Thurtle et al. 1998). Encouraging minorities to pursue careers in which they have historically been underrepresented is also being emphasized (Brown 2001; Doverspike et al. 2000; Hargrow and Hendricks 2001).

The resources here provide more information on what is needed to improve participation in NTOs, including attention to the classroom environment, retention after recruitment, and cultural change.

Betz, N. E., and Schifano, R. S. "Evaluation of an Intervention to Increase Realistic Self-Efficacy and Interests in College Women." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 56, no. 1 (February 2000): 35-52.

Women often have lower levels of measured interest and self-efficacy or confidence in "Realistic" careers involving technical, outdoor, or "hands-on" activities, the kinds of skills often taught in high school "shop," electronics, and trades courses or under the tutelage of a parent comfortable with home and auto repair. Interventions that increase their confidence and interest in these career pursuits can be effective.

Brown, B. L. *Women and Minorities in High-Tech Careers*. ERIC Digest No. 226. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, the Ohio State University, 2001. (ED 452 367) ericacve.org/digests.asp

Many of the barriers to science, mathematics, engineering, and technology careers may be overcome by effective school practices. Eliminating or reducing the social and educational factors that have created barriers to high-tech careers can help educators to move new generations of female and minority students into the high-tech careers in which they have been underrepresented.

Doverspike, D. et al. "Responding to the Challenge of a Changing Workforce: Recruiting Nontraditional Demographic Groups." *Public Personnel Management* 29, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 445-459.

To assist targeted employee recruitment efforts toward specific subgroups of the population, principles for recruiting older workers, Generation Xers, and members of minority groups are presented.

Flood, C.; Bates, P.; and Potter, J., eds. *Gender Equity for Males*. WEEA Digest. Newton, MA: Women's Educational Equity Act Resource Center, Education Development Center, 2000. (ED 450 041) www.edc.org/WomensEquity/pdf/males.pdf.pdf

Gender-equitable education provides equal opportunities and enables each student to reach his or her potential. Boys need to know that gender equity increases their options and benefits them, too. The success of boys and girls in school and beyond depends on gender equity in education.

"Gender Equity and the New Perkins Act: Implications for Vocational Educators." *Equity Issues* 5, no. 2, Summer 1999. Columbus: Center for Sex Equity, the Ohio State University, 1999. (ED 433 415)

Compares the 1998 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act and the 1990 act in terms of key gender equity provisions that are most critical to local school districts. Outlines implications for vocational educators serving single parents, displaced homemakers, and individuals entering nontraditional training and employment.

Hargrow, A. M., and Hendricks, F. "Career Counseling with African Americans in Nontraditional Career Fields." In *Career Counseling for African Americans*, edited by W. B. Walsh and R. P. Bingham, pp. 139-159. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

Provides an overview of African American career choice and what it means to be an African American man or woman in a nontraditional career field. Career-counseling strategies and interventions to consider when counseling African Americans in (or for) nontraditional career fields are described.

Hensley, B. H. "Nontraditional, Nongender Stereotyped Experiences: Do They Make a Difference for Young Women?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Bowling Green, KY, November 15-17, 2000. (ED 448 107)

A study of eight older adult women who shared a unique, nontraditional work experience during their late adolescence and young adulthood found that this experience had a pivotal impact on subsequent life decisions, especially about education and career.

Henson, K. D., and Rogers, J. K. "Why Marcia You've Changed! Male Clerical Temporary Workers Doing Masculinity in a Feminized Occupation." *Gender & Society* 15, no. 2 (April 2001): 218-238.

Male clerical temporaries, like other men who do nontraditional work, face institutionalized challenges to their sense of masculinity. Paradoxically, rather than disrupting the gender order, the gender strategies used by these male clerical temporaries help to reproduce the gendered organization of work.

Jobs that Pay! A Guide to Nontraditional Occupations for the 21st Century. Washington, DC: Women Work!, 2000.

Includes 70 job profiles and descriptions of emerging nontraditional occupations, information on how to advocate and market nontraditional training, and an overview of federal funding opportunities and other resources for nontraditional training programs.

Meadus, R. J. "Men in Nursing: Barriers to Recruitment." *Nursing Forum* 35, no. 3 (July-September 2000): 5-12.

Men still constitute a small minority of the nursing population. Although the literature has identified barriers that deter men from

entering the profession, nursing schools and other stakeholders have been conservative in their efforts to recruit men.

Miller, L. et al. "Saying 'Welcome' Is Not Enough: Women, Information Systems and Equity in Work." *Career Development International* 5, no. 7 (2000): 379-389.

Even if women overcome negative perceptions of computer-related jobs, studies of children and computers and of college students' responses to mock job ads indicate that abilities and traits for technology jobs may be associated more with one gender than the other. This may influence career choices in gender typical or atypical areas.

Multistate Academic and Vocational Curriculum Consortium. *Taking the Road Less Traveled: Educator's Tool Kit to Prepare Students for Nontraditional Careers*. Stillwater, OK: MAVCC, 2001. www.mavcc.org/whyneedtoolkit.htm

Includes participant workbooks on awareness, recruitment, retention, and placement; an awareness video; and a CD-ROM with supplemental materials to assist educators in developing strategies for increasing awareness, recruiting, retaining, and placing students in nontraditional occupations.

"Nontraditional Employment for Women." Washington, DC: Six Strategies for Family Economic Self-Sufficiency, Wider Opportunities for Women, 2001. www.sixstrategies.org/sixstrategies/nontraditional.cfm

Addresses nontraditional employment as one of the six self-sufficiency strategies. Explains what it is and why it works, approaches, and resources.

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund. *Nontraditional Employment for Low-Income Women: A Guide for Advocates*. Washington, DC: National Organization for Women, 1999. www.nowdef.org/html/issues/wel/text.shtml

Intended to help advocates for low-income women find out what works in nontraditional employment training and placement programs; advocate for more NTOs for low-income women; build coalitions to expand nontraditional opportunities; and educate the public about the ways in which nontraditional employment can help low-income women achieve economic stability.

Rodman, J. J., and Fisher, P. L. "Breaking Barriers: Women in Nontraditional Programs." Paper presented at the 8th Annual International Conference for Chairs, Deans, and Other Organizational Leaders, Long Beach, CA, March 1999. (ED 430 610)
Documents the efforts of Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute's Trades and Service Occupations Department to recruit and support women in nontraditional occupations, including gender and diversity training for faculty and staff, sexual harassment training, a support group for women students in nontraditional fields, support services such as childcare, and employment strategies.

Silverman, S. *Gender Equity and School-to-Career. A Guide to Strengthening the Links to Nontraditional Careers*. Hartford: Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, 1999. (ED 439 291)

Describes activities to infuse gender equity in secondary education: (1) 1-day gender equity conferences and workshops for females; (2) summer programs; (3) after-school programs and clubs; (4) parent-daughter events; (5) field trips to science and technology companies and community technical colleges; (6) world of technology programs; (7) career fairs or career days; (8) contacts with employers; and (9) career activities in the classroom.

Smith, L. B. "Perspectives from the Field: The Socialization of Females with Regard to a Technology-Related Career." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000. (ED 442 960)

A study of 12 women who have taken technological career paths and excelled in their fields showed that they attributed their success

in a mathematical, scientific, or technological profession to awareness of and interest in technical fields, encouragement of self-esteem, and encouragement of cognitive growth. Activities promoting development of critical thinking, reflective thinking, teamwork, question asking, and risk taking should be infused into girls' learning and play.

Stent, P., and Gillies, R. M. "Occupational Attitudes and Expectations of Year 12 Students in Single-Sex and Coeducational Schools: A Focus on Female Youth." *Australian Journal of Career Development* 9, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 13-19.

A survey of Year 12 Australian students in coed private, coed public, and all-female schools revealed a relationship between gender-role identity and traditional/nontraditional career choices. Occupations were more gender neutral, but blue- and pink-collar jobs remain stereotyped. Type of school did not influence girls' career attitudes or aspirations.

Thurtell, V.; Hammond, S.; and Jennings, P. "The Experience of Students in a Gender Minority in Courses at a College of Higher and Further Education." *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 50, no. 4 (1998): 629-646.

Interviews with 10 men studying early childhood education and 8 women in motor-vehicle engineering, areas in which they were gender minorities, revealed intimidating behaviors and stereotypes preventing their full participation. Difficulties also arose in workshops and job placements.

"WIA and Perkins: Common Provisions for Women." Washington, DC: Women Work!, 2001. www.womenwork@womenwork.org/legchart.html

Seven charts compare provisions for women under the WIA and Perkins in the following categories: displaced homemakers, single parents, and nontraditional training and employment at both the state and local levels.

Women's Bureau. *Hot Jobs for the 21st Century. Facts on Working Women*. Washington, DC: Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 2000. (ED 448 296) www2.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs/hot2000.htm

NTOs tend to offer higher wages than many of the occupations where women are in the majority. Engineers, architects, police and detectives, electrical and electronic technicians and technologists are examples of nontraditional occupations that are expected to exhibit fast growth and/or create a large number of jobs. All have 1999 median weekly earnings higher than the average for all wage and salary workers who usually work full time.

Women's Bureau. *Tools for Employers: Making Equal Pay a Reality in Your Workplace. Facts on Working Women*. Washington, DC: Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, 2000. (ED 448 297) www2.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/wb_pubs/tools.htm

Presents six primary tools employers can use to narrow or eliminate pay gaps in their workplaces: evaluate your compensation system; establish effective recruitment, hiring, and promotion practices; address diversity; have a system to ensure accountability; and websites that offer information and technical assistance.

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education under Contract No. ED-99-CO-0013. The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. *Trends and Issues Alerts* may be freely reproduced and are available at <<http://ericacve.org/fulltext.asp>>.



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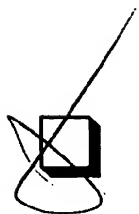


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